

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: A Marriage Built to Fail

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Produced towards the end of Norwegian Victorian Society, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* has gained international fame due to his leading female character, Nora. Seen as an attempt to gain freedom, Nora leaves her husband, children and marriage behind. Her actions have caused many feminist scholars to praise Ibsen "for his creation of female characters" who overcome the social oppression of women (He 134). Unni Langas, a Norwegian literature professor, claims "how gender and gender subordination are produced" when Nora walks out of her life (148). Kristin Ørjasæter, a Norwegian literary scholar, analyses Ibsen's close friendship with Camilla Collett, a famous Norwegian feminist and author, in hopes to connect Nora's actions with their discussions of "the oppression of women and women's right to freedom" (19). Nora is seen as a symbol of hope for women oppression, a success story in gaining freedom, and a hero for recognizing herself before her duties. However, after further analysis, there are troubling blind spots in feminist's scholars' claim to "Ibsen's presentation of the case on behalf of women" (Stetz 152). Through the Helmer's crumbling relationship, Ibsen challenges his audiences to appreciate one another by understanding the individual instead of living up to what is expected or demand. Firstly, Nora is only able to liberate herself from her upper-middle-class oppression because of the employment of the Helmer's lower-class maids, Anne Marie, and Helen. Both women have given up personal lives to domestically serve the Helmer family. *A Doll's House* only shows "one strain of class-specific late-nineteenth century feminism" (Stetz 152). The argument for feminism found in Ibsen's work is "more or less limited by class biases" instead of a call to free all women from the domestic sphere (Stetz 153).